

93

Ex Umbra

The North Carolina Central University
Student Literary Magazine



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Fall/Winter 1993 Edition

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The North Carolina Central University
student body.

Once again, Thank you!

This Literary Magazine is a student publication
and does not reflect the opinions or views of the staff and/or
faculty of N.C.C.U.

Editor's Notes

1993 marked *Ex Umbra's* 25th year in existence. Throughout the production of the Fall/Winter 1993 edition, I became aware of two pertinent issues: the lack of substantial financial support for this magazine, and the student's interest in *Ex Umbra*.

Midway through production, I found that I was not allotted an appropriate budget to produce a magazine that would accurately represent the North Carolina Central University student body. Through the generosity of another campus publication -- *The Campus Echo* -- and the Student Affairs division of N.C.C.U., I was able to follow through with my original plan for this edition. Moreover, I would like to stress the importance of administration's role in this publication: to support the magazine -- in any way possible -- just as it supports other organizations and individuals in their endeavors at this university, recognize the magazine's importance, and give it some sort of priority. Let's remember, this magazine is an academic endeavor, produced for and by students of N.C.C.U.

Also, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to the N.C. Central student body and especially those who contributed to the magazine -- in any way. The 1993 Fall/Winter edition is the largest *Ex Umbra* ever produced. Quality is often more important than quantity. However, I believe this edition showcases both. I got an extraordinary response from student contributors. You -- the students -- have proved to me that students matriculating at this university are indeed truly multi faceted and diverse.

Again, thank you for your support, contributions, and interest.

-Tangelique M. Williams

Table Of Contents

Heritage

The Originators	Dennis Richardson	11
United States of Africa.....	Clinton Harris	12
Black America.....	Cecilia L. Williams	12
Why Is It Black or White.....	Tracy Barnett	13
Do You Hear?.....	Thim McLeod	13
Congo Blonde	Regina Waith	14
Expelled From Church	Patricia Neems	15
Pain of A People.....	Jelani Favors	17
All That	Gregory Dillard	18
To The Critics.....	Haven Umstead	19
To My Strong Black Sisters.....	Donald Salmon	21
Proud To Be Nappy.....	Rhonda Wilson	22
Celebration of My Sister.....	Kemi Thompson	23
Black Woman	Juanita Cannon-Joyner	24
My People	Eric B. Scott	24
The Nile Is Still Flowing	Sonya Hall	25
Just Us Three	Gregory Dillard	26
I'm Not A Statistic.....	Alejandro Ellis	27
Our Forefathers	Berry Fairley	28
All I Want Is U	Gregory Dillard	29
Poem of Strength.	Jelani Favors	30
Dear Sistergirl.....	Sonya Hall	31
Unrequited Love	Donald Salmon	32
Am I A Black Man or A Man.....	Arana Pyfrom	33
The Spirit Lives On	Berry Fairley	34

Love

Confused	Ronda Robinson	37
Lovesick	Kevin D. Flythe	37
Untitled	Sonya Hall	38
True Love	Arana Pyfrom	39
A Son's Love	Michael Fanning	39
A Special Friend	Katrenia McPhail	40
Love Is.....	Jennifer L. Brown	41
Heaven	Eric B. Scott	42
Surrender	Alonzo Morrow III	42
When Will It Get Through To You.....	Pascha Steward	43
Heart of Glass.....	Clinton Harris	44
A Child Without A Mother's Love.....	Cecilia Williams	45
Silent Tears	Rhonda Wilson	45

Mama.....	Reginald Jones	46
Companions	Rhonda Reese	47
Love Hurts.....	Shelley Graves	48
Hold On	Lanika E. Case	48
Umm, That My Man	Rhonda Wilson	49
My Man	Kimberly Council	50
I Love You	Kemi Thompson	50
The Capability of Loving an Unloved Woman.....	Sonya Hall	51
Daytime.....	Danielle Porshe	52
Stages of Falling in Love	Thim McLeod	53
Blinded.....	Ronda Robinson	53
The Trilogy	Reginald Jones	54
Are You the One	Arana Pyfrom	55
Trust	Kemi Thompson	55
Untitled.....	Kara Fenner	56
Giving My All	Cecilia L. Williams	57
I Miss You Like Crazy.....	Kimberly Council	57
In My Heart	Michelle Hayes	58
My First Love.....	Arana Pyfrom	59
Ask Father	Carl D. Larsen	60

Ideology

Who Gave This Life to Me.....	Joy Blount	63
In Search of Self.....	Rhonda Wilson	64
Groove Thing.....	John Riddick , Jr.	64
Beggars.....	Carl D. Larsen	65
Whatacha Say?	Tammy Morrissey	66
Life Everlasting.....	Gregory Dillard	67
Resurrection	Danielle Porshe	68
Freedom or Bondage.....	Patricia Neems	69
The Journey	Carl D. Larsen	72
The Nominees for The Best Actor Are.....	Rhonda Wilson	73
Tomorrow.....	Shelley Graves	74
The Cause.....	Berry Fairley	74
Backsyde of a Mirror	Ayinde Hurrey	75
Cheap Talk.....	Rhonda Reese	78
Somebody.....	John Howard	78
Conversation (A Drug and He).....	James Smith	79
Inside Out.....	Donald Salmon	80
Alone.....	Eric B. Scott	81
Loosing Battle.....	Rhonda Reese	82
Lucy in the Sky.....	Regina Waith	83
What is a Real Man?.....	Katrenia McPhail	84
Homeless.....	Patricia Neems	85

Impatient.....	Rhonda Reese	88
Teach Me.....	Selena Manning	88
Everyone.....	Andre' Mack	89
The Moon.....	Narviaria Evans	90
Through Your Eyes.....	Cecilia Williams	91
Philos.....	Donald Salmon	92
The Mirror Effect.....	Rhonda Reese	93
Untitled.....	John Howard	94
Once Envious, Now Envied.....	Thim McLeod	95
Untitled.....	Kimberly Council	96
The Forest.....	Scott Bienick	97
Jesus Is.....	Sandra Theard	99
U End The Story.....	Haven Umstead	100
Get Down.....	James Smith	101
Almost Got Caught Sleepin'.....	John Riddick, Jr.	104
The Best Advice I Ever Received.....	Shelley Graves	105
Mama Got The Blues.....	Cecilia Williams	106
Mommy Please.....	Nathaniel Todd	107
Untitled	John Howard	108
Fast Car.....	Danielle Porshe	108
Father.....	Carl D. Larsen	109
The Man I See in the Mirror.....	Arana Pyfrom	110
Who Are You?.....	Reginald Jones	111
Trust.....	Carl D. Larsen	112
Strapped.....	James Smith	113
The Light.....	Carl D. Larsen	115

Art

Mont McMillian.....	117-118
Titus Thomas	119
Haven Umstead	120
Luis Franco	121-126
Luis Franco.....	Front Cover



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Heritage

The Originators

Our land, pure.
Our religion abundant
and everlasting.
Creations we have made of our lifestyle and culture.
We have passed on,
only to see our creations mocked
and copied for an uprising of grafted supremacy.
I have spent my lifetime
working in his field of American dreams.
Only to have him mock and tell his new generations he is the
originator
of my ideas and concepts.
My back bone is full of weakness.
My hands scarred from picking Sam's cotton.
Tears I have shed because of my struggle for peace are no longer
shed.
I am on the road of victory now. I'm taking an everlasting stroll
with my new master.
My creations and hard work show nothing today,
for he has caused a downfall of my generation.
I am the originator of all who wonder of me.
I am the originator, Me!

-Dennis Richardson

United States Of Africa

Since I am Black
This is My Dream
To pledge allegiance to the flag
Of the United States of Africa
Unto the Brotherhood for which it stands
One nation under groove
Indivisible with liberty and
Love for all

-Clinton Harris

Black America

Black America is a dream
A dream I hold deep within

Deep within my soul and
Deep within my heart

Black America is in a prayer
that I pray to the Lord each night

Black America is where I
live and where I'll die

-Cecilia Williams

Why Is It Black Or White

Why is everything black or white?
What about in-between?
What about the people of two races or even three.
Why are they forced to choose?
I am of many races; and I'm proud to be so.
I have many attributes that just one race alone
could not have created. Knowledge from one race
helps me understand the other. And knowledge from
the other race helps me understand myself.
Many people tell me that I'm confused about who I am.
That's not true.
They are confused.
I am proud of who I am.
I am the best of two worlds I say.
I am not Black, nor White; I am me!

-Tracy Barnett

Do You Hear

Black People
Do you Hear
Our brothers cry
In the jail cells of all the prisons
For a crime they did not commit?
Do You Hear
The screaming of children
Abused by their parents or someone they know?
Do You Hear
Our sisters yelling for help
When they have been robbed of their innocence?
Do You Hear
Our unborn babies pleading for their lives?
Do You Hear??

-Thim McLeod

Congo Blonde

that's what I call that
"because I'm worth it"
sista who struts
around wearing
her self-hating image
on her head thinking
she is Alice in Wonderland
only getting under
handed messages
about how ugly she is 'cause
she know for a fact
that black ain't
hardly beautiful in
a land where
Elvis is king.
CONGO BLONDE
that's what I call
that sista who spends
her last five dollars
to color her hair
especially the roots
 especially the roots
 the roots
 the roots
 the roots
 she's trying desperately
 to forget.
CONGO BLONDE
yeah, that's what she
be another
sista looking for
acceptance in a bottle
advertised on T.V.
by a white middle-
aged man who can't
even stand to look at himself.

-Regina Waith

Expelled From Church

Although I was personally taught against prejudice by my own parents and grandmother, there were cruel lessons I learned in the real world, especially with an extended family of "fine Christian folks" who still believed in "White Supremacy." I grew up in a small rural neighborhood with all my relatives living close by. The road we lived on was named for my family, and even the church we attended was named honoring my grandfather. I lived next door to my grandmother, and every Sunday after church all the relatives would come to visit. We were a loving and affectionate family with lots of laughter and fun. There were very few Blacks in my neighborhood; actually, the tenant farmer directly behind us are the only ones I distinctly remember as a child. The schools, stores, buses, and restaurants were completely segregated, so there was little interaction between any Black people and me. Also, the general attitude of my family, other than those closest to me, was pure and simple racism. As a child I often wondered why they always seemed so angry and full of hate toward Blacks, but I didn't dwell on the question.

However, when I became a parent the times were in drastic change. The sixties brought forced integration, bitter hostilities, and heated family arguments; but for me this period brought more personal contact with Black people. I was my daughter's Brownie Troop leader when she was six years old. Whether it was naivete on my part, or just closing my eyes to the real world, I don't know, but I encouraged a racially mixed Brownie Troop, and my daughter and I were having the time of our lives. We had twenty-two girls, six and seven years old. Six were Black, two were Indian, and the rest were White. We met weekly at my family-named church building and had a great time learning and playing together. The girls were all close and never seemed to notice each other's color at all.

Then I planned a camping trip with my girls. At the same time that their parents were bring them to the church parking lot to meet me, another church function was taking place, so the lot was filled with the "upstanding, Christian, highly moral" folks of my community. Some of the members there that day were my own aunts and uncles. The camping trip was great. We slept in

front of the fireplace in our sleeping bags in a huge open room at Spruce Pine Lodge. We worked and played together as a unit as the girls earned badges for cooking, hiking, crafts, and first aid. At the end of the weekend we were all tired but close and happy. The Sunday following the camping trip I was met by the "elders" at church, who, in a very fatherly fashion, shared their concern about me and the reputation I was getting in the community by "sleeping with colored children." They felt it would be best if I dismissed the "colored" children from the troop, maintaining that "this was a white church and we just don't want to start anything."

I could not believe what I was hearing. I sat in total shock for minutes, feeling anger manifesting itself as red blotches up my neck and face. I was trembling uncontrollably and fighting very hard to control the tears that welled up in my eyes. I could not even respond just got up and walked out, and never returned. A few weeks after this episode, the pastor, who was a very good friend of my family, was dismissed for "preaching about loving Blacks." All future meetings of our scout troop were held downtown in the County office building where I was employed. I have felt since that day that I was "kicked out" of my family church. The situation has embittered me through the years, especially toward Christianity. I just do not believe that prejudice of any kind has room in a true Christian's heart, yet I know there is a great deal of racism still lingering in the churches of this town. Also, my relationship with most of the members of my extended family died that day. I literally have to force myself to attend reunions, funerals and weddings that are family related, and I do so only for the benefit of my mother, not because I want to. I lost respect for them years ago, and time has not seemed to heal that wound.

-Pat Neems

Pain Of A People

From Queens and Kings to hos and pimps
From Warriors and Princesses to niggers and tricks
One more father leaves his child
One more mother, still in tears
And doctors still cant diagnose
The pain for over 400 years
Damn, I need an aspirin
I can barely take it all in
But once I think things are better
Here comes injustice again
Maybe it's just me, and things are really all right
Maybe I was the only one trying to understand
Why another brother was shot last night
Maybe I'm just buggin and the problem
Is really not that big
Or maybe i'm the next 1 out of 22 brothers
Who's ditch is the next one they dig
Maybe I should just chill, toss a forty
And say Yo I gots to get mine
Or maybe I should wake my black-ass up
And see my people are running out of time!

-Jelani Favors

All That!

What are you black woman?
What can you do?
Do you have any limitations?
Are you not the daughter of Eve, the original Afrikan mother?
Aren't you the rib of Adam, the first Afrikan man?
Doesn't this realization make your black man and yourself one?
Together can you not accomplish all things?
Is your black man not the physical manifestation of God?

Black woman, You are the Goddess of the universe, the mother of civilization, the nurturer, the supporter, the motivator, the most beautiful creation of God. You are the moon which reflects the sun (the black man); therefore there is always light. You are the daughter of your most holy and righteous father (God). You can do all things with the help of God. You are as boundless as the universe... as unique as the stars hung in the sky by the creator. You are the daughter of the original mother and you deserve respect because you are original and without you there would be none. The black man and woman are one and the same. They need each other and together are indestructible. Your black man was custom made by the creator in the image of himself therefore possesses the potential to be like his father..., holy, righteous, the obtainer of knowledge, applier of wisdom, exerciser of understanding, lover, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

With these possessions I ask you this, "What aren't you?"

-Gregory R. Dillard

Consider This

Why are we allowing this rap stuff to destroy our youth? Why do rappers curse so much? Why do we allow this garbage to be broadcast to our youth? Why are they so angry at the black female? Don't they ever have anything positive to say?

Have you ever heard these questions or statements? I have heard them and some are honest comments. However some of these questions are veiled insults and most of the comments are plainly unaware of the ideological and musical landscape called Hip-Hop. I will attempt to explain this landscape briefly and answer some frequently asked questions somewhat. The questions above make a number of crude assumptions. For instance they assume that the nature of the music is negative. Actually no form of creativity can be "negative" (or destructive). If this is inherently bad it could not have achieved the success it has had. People aren't stupid and would not hear something obviously unhealthy for them. The negative appraisal of rap is ignorant because it ignores the consistently positive flow of lyrics which has existed from its beginning. Sugar Hill, The Furious 5, Kurtis Blow, Public Enemy, M.C. Lyte, Boogie Down Productions, Biz Markie, Pete Rock & C.L. Smooth, Run-DMC, Whodini, Stetsasonic, De La Soul, Queen Latifah, Arrested Development, Ice-T and Digable Planets in addition to MANY more have discernible track records of inciting thought and encouraging respectable behavior in their lyrics. Unlike performers who gather for rare "We Are the World" sort of efforts. Let me be clear. Rappers, however positive, cannot save our youth. No entertainment/art form can do that. Once the music has faded out, we still have problems to solve but some continue to make rather hypocritical demands on a genre that has given its fair share consistently.

Consider this: If rap, Hip-Hop or whatever you call it incites violence and disrespect, then do Luther Van Dross, Whitney Houston, S.W.V, Christopher Williams, Patti LaBelle, Marvin Gaye, Jodeci, Teddy Pendergrass, The Four Tops, En Vogue, Jade, H-Town and others encourage teen pregnancy and/or lust? (None of the artists named have EVER mentioned birth control in ANY of their songs as of this writing.) Does Jazz encourage apathy in black folk? Do the Blues encourage alcohol abuse and domestic violence? Does Gospel encourage hysterics and other "crazy" behavior in its listeners? Another aspect that rap's detractors usually overlook is commercialism and yes, "the white man's" capitalism. I am not defending bad lyrics and it's sad worthless words are what media typically focuses on, but the fact is that what we see happening to Hip-Hop today is an updated version of what happened

to the Blues, Jazz, and early Rock-n-Roll. First the music is ignored by whites, then they become fascinated with it. Next, some label the music as "bad" for one reason or another while others commercialize and trivialize it in a variety of ways. Next the industry imitates it and/or seduces performers with little or no dedication to the music into "selling out". This describes many but is not limited to "gangsta" rappers. Ironically, Arrested Development, a positive group with a cultural/revolutionary thrust was criticized for accepting major awards from the music industry which is generally seen as exploitive.

The subculture of Hip-Hop started in streets, parks and local clubs of Black/Hispanic New York City. It talked about many subjects other than one-dimensional love, sex, and emotionalism to which black and pop radio still cling. This subculture includes graffiti, aerosol art, music, dance, clothing and terminology similar to Jazz of decades ago. Like Jazz, Blues or Gospel it is also a very personal music. For instance, although I may be interested in or identify with Heavy D or Muddy Waters (blues vocalist) I can't write from their point of view.

Having said all this, we are back to the questions we started off with. What about profanity, disrespect to women, violence, blunt-smoking and cheap, brain-cell destroying alcohol? Well, profanity in music is not at all unique to rap. I don't say that to justify it but it is inaccurate to single rap out. The same applies to the other topics. Most rappers describe things which are common (not normal) to their surroundings. If you really want to know why SOME performers disrespect women check the surrounding. If you want to know why SOME rappers think 40 ounce alcohol is cool, check their surroundings. One thing I'm sure of personally is that before our period of slavery we didn't display these stupid, homicidal, self-and God-hating characteristics that we read about daily. Before our immoral migration to the Americas we generally behaved much better than this. Even during and after slavery up to the beginning of integration we behaved noticeably better.. We are now showing the worst characteristics of our oppressors similar to how child abuse runs in cycles, transferred from the abuser to the abused. Correcting THIS situation should be on more minds instead of being swept away by the latest "rap" controversy.

-Haven Umstead

To My Strong Black Sisters

When I hear some of you say "I don't need a man!" I wonder, "What do you mean?"

Do you really mean that you don't need the loving tender touch of a good Black man? All I know is that I need you. I'm a Black man, living in an unloving world. I need you more than ever. But yet you don't need me?

Since the beginning of our holocaust, all we've had is one another. But now you don't need me.

That hurts. It hurts us more than you can imagine. But I'll go on. Unneeded.

I need you Black Woman. Not only that I need to be loved, I need to be told of my worth, but most of all I need to be needed.

I love you.

-Donald B. Salmon, Jr.

Proud To Be Nappy

No more burns from perms, that were much too strong.
They took a whole week to heal,
For the sake of straight hair that is "pretty" and long.
No thank you is how I feel.
There are scrunches and fingerwaves, dyes and weave
And braids for those who are lazy.
Getting your hair done every week.
Child please, you must be crazy,
Should I rod it, curl it, cut it or set it
Or maybe even wrap it.
All of this made me say, "Forget it"
So I decided to Nap it.

My parents and friends said, "Please don't do it."
But it was something I felt inside,
The African within me made me chose it.
And those feelings I could no longer hide,
My consciousness was raised to a higher level
I hope one day you too will see
These locks worn with pride make me a rebel
So good-bye perm, I prefer natural beauty.
For you sisters still perming, don't get me wrong.
Do whatever makes you happy,
As Black women we are all strong
But part of my strength lies in my pride to be NAPPY!!

-Rhonda Wilson

Celebration of My Sister

i celebrate you.

for holding your head up,
keeping it up.

i celebrate you.

for being what you are,
what they thought you couldn't be.

i celebrate you.

for your sweat,
and painstaking effort.

i celebrate you.

for your mocha, honey dipped, dark chocolate skin.

i celebrate you.
for being my beautiful,
and very black sister.

i celebrate you.

for you are to be celebrated,
congratulated,
applauded.

-Kemi L. Thompson

Black Woman

They cannot see the sorrow
Or the pain, in my eyes.
The heartaches, the discouragement,
I desperately try to hide.

Only the shade of my skin
Is the feature that stands so bold—
Not the stories I have to tell,
Or the ones I left untold.

Ancestors spoke of a world, someday,
That would have many opportunities to seize.
However, this world lets the circumstances
Of my birth cloud my abilities.

I long for that day when no one
Is judged by the color of his skin
When all my Nubian sisters will stand and shout
I am a NATURAL BLACK WOMAN!

-Juanita Cannon-Joyner

My People

How can we be strong
What makes you think with them
we could possibly get along
When so much between us is wrong?

-Eric B. Scott

The Nile Is Still Flowing

My fellow Nubian tribe
I fail to embrace you with love and peace.
My sister I pose you no threat.

The world has taught us to compete with one another.
We are the queens of the earth. We have made promises to the
world and watched them unfold for centuries.
My sister I pose you no threat.

Yet, we insist to talk with poorly
imitated pride and not
make mention of the other.
We have long forgotten our
ancestral sisters who sat side by side
by the Nile to share
long-told truths of peace.
To celebrate the existence
of each sister present.
My sister I pose you no threat.

Like us they knew not the names of each sister.
Like us they knew each other simply by
Nature.
Myself and all queens before me, salute your
birthright crown.
My sister I pose you no threat.

This is only natural.

-Sonya Hall

Just Us Three

Hello Eve, my Abyssinian Queen, Goddess of the universe, Mother of all creations.

Where have you been my Queen? Why have we parted?

Long ago we sojourned as one; we held hands, walking in perfect love (the will of God).

I remember when you were respected by all because of your strength, grace, and natural beauty. I recall the days when the black man loved, protected, and respected you.

I recall the days when we loved in truth and in deed.

We once walked the road of life together. What happened my Queen?

Perhaps it was I. Perhaps I lost sight of your majesty. Perhaps I left your wonderful light to dwell in darkness.

Then again perhaps it was you. Perhaps you lost faith in me. Perhaps you lost respect in yourself which caused me to do so also.

Cast not the blame upon me nor thee. What's done is done. Now is the time to rebuild our love...to become one.

I know that we can, just us three, you, I, and the Most High.

-Gregory Dillard

I Am Not A Statistic

I have played with second hand toys and rode bikes with different wheels. I have packed cucumbers and worked in every type of field. I have cleaned bathrooms and I even mopped floors. Swung a bushax so many times, that my hand developed sores. But you know, through all that I was not a statistic.

I have taken a '72 Chevy and a station wagon out on the town. I rode my father's bus when the cars let us down. I have watched other kids drive their fancy cars and trucks. But I have parked right next to them and never tried to duck. You know why? Because I am not a statistic.

I have gone to college, and hung out all alone. I didn't need a lot of friends, a lot of jewelry or special colognes. I have walked all over campus with a dollar as my biggest bill. Yet I had enough upbringing where I knew not to steal. You know why? Because I am not a statistic.

Statistics tell you that 3 out of every 5 black men will die or be killed. Statistics tell you that 4 out of every 5 black man will lie, cheat, and steal. Statistics tell you that black men choose drug selling over an honest day's work. That we beat on our women and children and treat our families like dirt. My friend, I am not a statistic.

You see statistics are just charts that people throw in your face. To try and make you ashamed of being a member of the African-American race. Statistics can make you feel that being a black man is the hardest thing to be. Well, I am not a statistic, so they are not talking about me.

Black Men don't believe everything you read, and start doing your part. Believe in God, your family and also in your heart. Don't think because you cannot afford fancy things you have to go and steal. Just trust in your abilities and in the way you feel.

Black Women quit thinking black men want to beat on you and cheat. Because a lot of us don't walk on that side of the street. Black Parents remember to stay responsible and do not leave kids to make decisions on their own. Your guidance and love will prove the statistics wrong.

The next time you hear statistics hold your head up high. Just because you are between 18 and 21 don't mean it is your turn to die. You can't believe in what the statistics say you will do. What you make of your life is entirely up to you. You can either believe in yourself and do your part. Or you can be the one that puts another number on the chart. But me...I refuse to be a STATISTIC!!!

-Alejandro V. Ellis

Our Forefathers

Way back. When? Back in slavery times, our Forefathers lived,
yes they lived!

They lived to work in fields each day, their children bred for
work, not play. Yes, oh yes our Forefathers lived!
Being sold and auctioned like cattle or merchandise to slave
owners with the highest price, Our Forefathers started families
close knit, all as one, to be sold as slave-hands breaking the
family bond. Yes! oh Yes, our Forefathers lived.

When the master found out that Education among our
Forefathers was taking place, they did all they could to
dampen our race -- By beating them, killing? them and
watching them plead. While their hearts, souls, and minds
would constantly bleed. Yes, oh yes, Our Forefathers lived!
At church our Forefathers gathered to praise the Lord. The
Lord, their refuge their Mighty sword, would give them peace
and listen to the dark deep cries of their souls and hear them
singing the sweet songs of old. Songs like, "Nobody Knows
the Trouble I See" and "Swing Low Sweet Chariot", and "The
Old Rugged Cross". Then soon they would feel less loss, For
they would pray and pray and pray and pray, "Lord Please
Give Us A Better Day?"

So down through the ages the Lord answered our Forefathers
prayers and kept us all in mind. Freedom our Forefathers
finally did find.

But is there really Freedom? Yes we are free from chains, but
we are still bound and we haven't fulfilled all of our Aims,
Believe me,
it's just a different game.

There is still a question of freedom

A question of freedom, what did you say? It's different now.
It's a

New day!

A New day is just not what we find until all of the Black race
can say "Freedom, Justice, and Liberty are Mine.

As our Forefathers, Let's get back to God, Let's Stick together,
Let's pray "Lord Please give us a better day?"

And the Lord will answer our prayers, and another war will be
won. We can't stop working till our days are done

Help Your Children, Help Your Parents

Help Your Neighbors, Help Yourself

So when we die and go to heaven and we see our Forefathers there
They will be able to say, " Our Preaching, Our Teaching, Our Dying,
Our Pain, was not all done, all done in vain.

Yes, Oh Yes, Our Forefathers Lived!

And they still live

Within Our Hearts Today...

-Berry Fairley

All I Want Is U

All I want is you black woman...you are all things to me. Without you I am incomplete...I lack the total armor needed to fight in this war called life. With you I can accomplish all things.

I sometimes fail to give you credit for the wonderful joy that you bring.

You have been by my side in times of happiness...but more importantly you were there in times of adversity...there to hold my hand, comfort me, ease my mind, and encourage me when

The weight of the world was heavy upon my shoulders, thus you shared my burdens. Never once did you leave my side. Truly your presence is a blessing from God. So natural, so intelligent, so beautiful,

so loving, so diverse, so strong...it is with you that I belong.

For no one else can nurture, motivate, and love me the way that you do.

My only obsession...the twenty first letter of the alphabet, my queen, all I want is U.

-Gregory R. Dillard

Poem Of Strength

Hey! Young brother, don't take your own life
I know you're going through a lot with all
the pain and strife
But you have so much to live for, so many
things left undone
These are the best years of your life and
they've only just begun
You say things seem uncertain, and
your life's not right
well stay strong my strong my young brother , you're
not alone in your fight
You see the sons of slaves have gone mad
and it's time for brothers to unite
it might seem dark now, but you can only see the stars at night
In other words, young brother, no matter
what you're going through
soon your problems will fade away and
your worries will be few
So keep on marching forward black man
and your victories will be won
and once you choose life over death
then your own revolution has began!

-Jelani Favors

Dear Sistergirl

Greetings my sister: I write to you to extend feelings of contempt for what I see you fail to do for yourself and feelings of love that are a direct result of tribal heritage. Do you know who you are? Let me remind you so we can be thankful. Before you are anything else, you are a strong black woman. You are not the name that you were christened with. It was handed to you. Whatever your name, you are the woman you have chosen to be. Before you are Mrs. So and So or "his girl" you are a strong black woman. You are not dependent upon anyone. You certainly do not need a man for existence. You need a man to enhance the strong black woman that you are. You are not disillusioned by love oaths or emotional need. You obtain all you need emotionally from the God within you. You are a strong black woman. You were born with all things required for survival. You will use them to do more than live. You are a strong black woman. You are your first priority and all else is secondary or unnecessary. You are a strong black woman. You love your black man in spite of what continues to exist and embrace your black man but only after you have embraced yourself for a time. You are a strong black woman. You came into this world a lamb. You will live and die a lion. Roar, my sister, roar.

-Sonya Hall

Unrequited Love

Black folks love,
unrequited.

I mean:

we love that which does not love us.

Even pro-Black Black folks love,
unrequited.

Here's how I know: I heard two brothers arguing,
about whose hometown was the best.

“New York got it goin' on!”

one ignorant Negro said. “No, D. C. is where it
is at!” the other idiot replied. I'm looking at
them both, thinking to myself,

“I wonder if they realize that neither N.Y. nor D.C. gives a
damn about either of them.”

But yet they go on.

Loving what does not love them.

But we all do it, don't we.

From city to city, state to state,

Black folk embrace this nation. We brag and boast of what our
hometowns have:

While we ain't got shit.

We as a people don't run a damned thing in this nation:

But we'll run as fast as we can,

to defend it. Every year on the the 4th of July we wave our
flags and burn hot dogs on a grill.

When on July 4, 1776 after Jefferson and Hancock
signed on the dotted line...

they probably beat one of their slaves who did not feel like
workin'. Then they raped that same slave's wife...
as he watched.

So while you continue to have meaningless discussions on how
you love your home towns remember your hometown is in
america and america has always hated you unrequited

-Donald B. Salmon, Jr..

Am I a Black Man or Am I a Man

Am I a man or am I a black man? Which one am I?
I hope I am a man judged on my character
and not the color of my skin.

Yet I know that it is not so, the world is not ready for
a strong black man who just wants to be a strong
man.

I would hope that I would not have to be
remembered for just uplifting my race but the human race.
We are the children of the Mother and Father of
civilization.

We are a people of culture.

When the rest of the world was in the dark ages, we
shined the light.

I am proud of my race, proud of my history,
Do not allow our history to be limited to once a month,
But honor it always.

Until our black leaders are not just remembered as
black leaders but world leaders.

Not just as black men and women but men and
women of character and dignity.

Am I a black man or am I a man?

I am both.

-Arana Garvin Pyfrom

The Spirit Lives On

The Spirit Lives on, The Spirit Lives on, God's got the Spirit, and the Spirit Still lives on...

Crack Cocaine put in our children's veins, Children turn to God instead of the Drug Fame...

The Spirit Lives on, The Spirit lives on, Gods got the Spirit and The Spirit Still lives on...

Babies having babies causing so much Pain and Strife, Only making it hard on a young child's life,

Black High School drop-outs. It's a crying Shame, Black Men in Prison, Who is to Blame!

The Spirit Lives On, The Spirit Lives on, God's got the Spirit and the Spirit Still Lives On,

Our race has made a lot of progress... Yes, We All Know this is true, But our work must go on because there is still a lot to do...

The Struggle Still Continues, My Black people why can't we see, We must continue to work hard, Do our best, And be all that we can possibly be.

By turning back to God, and Turning away from Drugs, We must educate our children with knowledge and with Love..

We must not become stagnant with our lives, and do our Best to Excel, By educating ourselves, Staying aware of our Black Situation, and not letting our race Fail...

These things mentioned Can be difficult, and create a Great Strain, But we must not let Dr. Martin Luther King's Life and Death be in Vain...

So the Struggle must Continue, and the Spirit must live on..

The same spirit that has lead our Black race through Generations, God's Holy Spirit Must Live On!!!

The Spirit Lives on, The Spirit Lives on, God's got the Spirit and The Spirit Still Lives on...

-Berry Fairley



Justin
Timothy/93

Love

Confused

How do I express these feelings I have?
What is it about you that puzzles me so?
Why can't I get you out of my mind?
How will I ever know your true feelings
Who else affects me the way you do?
Can you tell me what you want from me?
When will I feel that you are the one for me?
Will you be there for me when I need you?
Don't you know by now I love you?
Where do we go from here?

-Ronda Robinson

Lovesick

Feelings change from day to day just like the weather...
But we all must go on from one day to the other.
Life is not easy and yet not always pleasing...
So if you have feelings for someone,
let those feelings flow
and stop the teasing.
When there is love in the heart,
there is always a spark to keep the fire burning...
But when a love game is played,
someone is left yearning. Playing with someone's feelings
is a step in the wrong direction,
and a step made asking for immediate correction.
There are those who care and those who don't.
And those who have and those who want.
But for love to be true,
it really takes two,
because
standing as one is tough,
and having a broken heart is ever so rough.

-Kevin D. Flythe

Untitled

I am thinking of all the nights your head was propped on my pillow and your feet on my coffee table. And I was glad it was there.

I haven't forgotten my days that began and ended with you. There were days I suppressed my own wants so yours could be fulfilled. You never knew. I simply obliged you.

There were countless times I stood at the stove while you sat at the table with nothing but your appetite waiting on your plate. And it was okay.

There were nights I spent asking God to tell you how I felt because you would never believe me. I made special efforts not to tell you, just show you.

This time I am praying for something special, myself. I am praying for strength on the upcoming days and hours and times I will not be there. You need to appreciate me for the woman I am and not the woman you fear I may become.

You see, I needed you tonight and you were not there. Your excuse was just like you, inexcusable. Now, if you don't mind, I need to excuse myself.

-Sonya Hall

True Love.

I had no idea how easy you would be to talk to and I never imagined that our early conversations would grow into such a strong friendship. I never suspected that we'd discover so many common interests and values, or that I could ever enjoy simple pleasures as much as when they are shared with you. I never thought we'd have so many warm and happy times together, or that your compassion would help so much to ease me through the rougher times.

I didn't expect to feel so soon as though I'd known you forever, or to trust you so easily with my secrets and deepest feeling. I never thought your support could make such a difference, that your encouragement would bring my dreams closer, make my success sweeter and my losses easier to accept. I never imagined that I would grow to want, to need, and to love you so much. When you first came into my life, I never dreamed you'd soon be someone whom I couldn't live without.

-Arana Pyfrom

A Son's Love

Blood and spirit we do share:
On the seventh day in Autumn, my life you bore.
Although gratitude is scarce, love is still strong,
because you gave me a heart beat to last very long.
And even though 21 years old, I am still introduced
your baby or your little man.
While growing up wondering will there be harm
Being able to look out a six story window with no alarm.
Raising me was tough and at times there were doubts.
Now that I am an adult, I'm glad of the way I turned out.
And because of you, I have a compassion for others,
but I direct it to you, my mother.
And although my gratitude has simmered in days
I still sing this song in praise.

-Michael Fanning

A Special Friend

Someone whom you can talk to
and share your thoughts at anytime
day or night, and they will listen
attentively without a doubt.
You don't have to worry
about your personal experiences
being told down the street.
They will stand by you through thick and thin.
Even though sometimes you
may not have been a very good friend.
No matter what,
they'll be there for you in the end.
Often they make way,
when everything seems to be hopeless and lost.
When there's no one else to turn to,
this person is always on time.
They will give you strength,
peace,
encouragement,
determination,
unconditional love,
salvation,
and most of all
eternal life.

If you doubt what I'm saying,
try God
for yourself and let him be that
special friend in your life,
like he is in mine.

-Katrenia McPhail

Love Is

Love is an emotion that cannot be seen
Love is the thing that some people spend their whole life
 looking for but never find
Love is a small word with a big and difficult meaning
Love is supposed to solve all of life's problems so why does
Love causes so many problems
Love is the theme of movies the thing that lets songs put us in
 the mood
Love is the subject of books, the topics of talk shows
Love is the excuse we use when we make an ass of ourselves
God's Love is not enough to please us.
 We believe that we need man's
 Love as well
Once you find Love why does Hell soon follow
When did Sex become Love's only example
Why does Love have a figure
Why is Love to the naked eye always with everyone
else but you
Love
If you ever get tired of running my heart is ready to
give you
rest.

-Jennifer Leander Brown

Heaven

Your skin is my strength
The softness of it gives me hope
Joy I'm never able to explain
Sinking into it and never wanting to escape
Engulfing my feelings as I sink deeper
With each caress
I never want to be found
Only experience the softness, the smell,
Your darkness against my darkness
Only to experience you

-Eric B. Scott

Surrender

Hold me close, hold me near.
Take me now, I have no fears.
I fought and lost a wineless war.
Take me baby, make me yours.

Take my hands, take my eyes.
Take my lips, take my thighs.
Reluctant feelings are no more,
Take me baby, make me yours.

A journey with uncertain end.
Freely I take the hand of sin.
With your touch, with wings I soar,
Take me baby, make me yours.

-Alonzo Morrow II

When Will It Get Through To You

When will it get through to you that I
want us to be?
All that I've told you should make you see.

I admit to a mistake, but to err is human,
which I am.
What more can I do, sweetheart, in order
for you to understand.

What went on in my past is no longer
an issue.

I've told you that no one else matters,
but when will it get through to you?

When will it get through to you that how
you feel means so much?
I even look forward to a simple "hello"
or a slight touch.

All that you've ever said and done to me
I remember and hold dear.
I want all the minor insecurities to quickly disappear.

Relationships take time to rise to
endless heights.
Let's just give it a little time, we'll reach
them together, alright?

From this point on, we'll begin our
climb side by side, just me and you.
When, I ask, will it finally get through to you?

-Pascha Steward

Heart Of Glass

It took years for my soul to evolve; it took the shape of a Heart of Glass. It was very precious and fragile. As a child, I would walk around with my Heart of Glass, only showing it to my relatives and a few close friends. I did not even let them get too close to it. Only I was allowed to hold it, touch it, or feel it beat. When I was a teenager, this girl told me she loved me and would do anything in the world for me if I let her hold my Heart of Glass --- just one time. When I was handing it to her, I noticed she was clumsy, but the thought just flashed through my mind -- until she dropped it. Before the twinkling of an eye, my sure hands were right there to catch my Heart of Glass before it shattered on the ground. That was a close call. I said to myself, "Never again." As time went on, I met a young lady in college with whom I trusted my my Heart of Glass. I had hoped it would be forever. She dropped it!! I could not believe it. She dropped it! I was speechless. No one bumped into her, nor was the wind blowing. Reality really kicked in when I found out she did it on purpose. There was nothing I could do. Here I was, just standing there without a heart. Only a mound of glass was left. I kept telling myself, "See, you fool, look what you've done now." Then I looked around and noticed others sweeping up small mounds of glass that used to be their heart. Some of them were even smiling. Through time, the small mound of glass will form another heart. Only this time, it will be stronger..

-Clinton Harris

A Child Without A Mother's Love

What is a child without a mother's love?
An undefined individual never thought of
Never to be cared for loved or held
Someone whose soul is ruined forever
Never to be wanted or to have the feeling of togetherness

What is a child without a mother's love?
Lonely with a torn heart
Alone
Never to feel they have a place to call home
So who can they be; where can they go?

What is a child without a mother's love?
I don't know
Left alone to cry
A child without a mother's love is destined to die.

-Cecilia Williams

Silent Tears

I Don't need them!
Who says they are a necessity to a woman's life
That our world is incomplete without their touch,
Without their caress,
Free from their strong tenderness,
That we cannot continue in the absence of
Their masculine arms protecting us from further headache?
--Or so we think--.
Who insists that they are the greatest joy I can obtain
And that life seems non-existent when exempt of a kiss
That makes my heart dance endlessly,
While my blood bubbles with ecstasy,
Keeping my face forever affixed with a smile
As a blush bursts through?
My tears, that's who.

-Rhonda Wilson

Mama

Sweet Mama, look at you; nubianity at its finest.
Yes you, my queen, most beautiful of God's creation
Mama. This is the name I give you.
Not to be confused with maternal, but affectionately eternal,
for the mother of civilization. Black woman.

You are to be treated as a queen
And I will treat you as such.
Because I look up to you and respect you
And I love you so much

I would put you up on a pedestal
Upon a plateau so high and proud
No one could ever bring you down
But I would sing your praise strong and loud.

For the times you were broken,
For the tears you shed,
For the ones who didn't appreciate you
and love you the way I've promised to.
May we erase their memories and the times they were untrue.

For the hardest times, when you need me there
Carrying and dealing with maternal troubles.
I'll be there every step, for every right and every left.
Lean on me so I can be the man I profess to be.
For my children's mama, the firm root of my family tree.

-Reginald Jones

Companions

We all pick up people along the way in life.

We keep them beside us.

Not letting them go – For now

Keeping them close to our hearts.

Loving them for eternity – Or while they
allow us to

Don't leave me

We will always be like this - forever

You are my best friend. You are my
only lover.

I love you – I love you

Stay with me! – I'll stay with you

See you through - For Now

People that we plan to go through life with.

We let our guards down and not them in.

Not realizing that they may not get bored or tired
or just heartless and suddenly decide to leave.

People that we cherish. People who we tell our stories to.

Stories that we can't trust with anyone else.

Those whispered words that hurt so much
even to speak.

But they will understand, no one else will no one
else can.

It's a secret – Oh girl that goes without saying

Just between me and you, It's okay

I understand you -

Thank God someone understands me.

Please listen to me! I am listening to you.

Stop judging me! I would never judge you.

How long will this last?

Someone to share our pain with. because pain
gets mighty heavy at times.

I don't know what I'm going to do!

Come and talk to me. –

You know that I'm here for you – Today

As we move on we try to hold these people in
our hands. Trying not to let them go.

Then they are gone we mourn the loss or curse
their name.

And we travel on

In search of another.

-Rhonda Reese

Love Hurts

Only God up above knows how much it hurts
The everlasting pain that always lurks
Around every dark corner, in the car, and in
the store
When I go to sleep, and wake up, the
pain hurts even more
When I think of his smile and his loving face
My heart races, and then drops as my tears
fill the place
It's no fair falling in love, to have it crumble
at your feet
When you're in love with the man you've been
waiting all your life to meet.

-Shelley Graves

Untitled

Hold on.
Don't get mad and throw priceless crystal and china because I
haven't said that I... you know.
I'm waiting until I know it's true.
I don't want to say it to answer you.
But, when I do say it, it's be to assure you that I
trust and respect you.
I'm making sure that I'll be around, even when things go
wrong, and your world is upside-down.
I'm making sure that you'll be around when I need
a shoulder to cry on, with all the right things to say.
It's at moments like this that I'll turn to you and say
I love you, too.

-Lanika Case

Umm, That's My Man

From Golden honey to Chocolate brown,
With your full lips caressing mine,
To run my fingers along your body
My Black man you're so divine.
The way you hold me, the way you want me
None other can take your place.
I look in your eyes and see my soul.
It's written all over your face.
You whisper softly in my ear
And the chills run down my spine.
Holding me closely around my waist,
My Black man, umm you're so fine.
Your sense of humor and charming ways
Capture my imagination.
My friend, my partner, and ultimate lover
In which I find inspiration.
You carry yourself demanding respect
As the first of all mankind.
Together we can do anything.
Black man, I'm glad you're mine.

-Rhonda Wilson

My Man

I've been in love with boys before but never with
a man
He guides my spirit with comfort
and always holds my hand
He adds to my strength, encourages my soul
he makes me feel whole
He takes my pride to higher heights
as I feel his nature rise
I am a woman when we are together

-Kimberly N. Council

I Love You

Your love devours me
Bringing me to my knees;
Engulfing me with your touch,
In every way you please.

you whisper promises in the night, Arousing me with words you
come I follow

i wait for you Calling your name,
Wonderful

Marvelous

King of Kings

Lord of Lords

Prince of Peace

Emanuel

My God.

I love you.

-Kemi L. Thompson

Capability of Loving An Unloved Woman

I'm tired of playing peek-a-boo with my feelings. When we are together we have a good time but we both hide our emotions in an attempt to protect ourselves. Well, I am tired of playing and the street lights have come on and it is time to go in the house. AND TALK. I will do for you despite what you might think. You do not have to worry about me handing you 2 plane tickets to Rio, but if I purchase you some socks I am not trying to be your mother nor am I proposing marriage. It means I saw the damn hole in the ones you were wearing Saturday night.

I care about you. When I go to the grocery store, sometimes I wish you were there. On occasion, I would like to be able to ask someone if I should buy the red apples or the granny smith. I feel closer to you when we do little things together. I have taken my panties off in front of more men than I have gone to the park with. Granted, I love it when we are in bed. (A great deal, mind you.) I genuinely like you. I have loved before but I have not always liked the person and by the time I realized I did not like them, I was in love and excused the behavior. We won't go into whether the love was reciprocated. Does it matter? Hell yeah it does. Because if it was not we would say I was used and there are days in my life when I might agree with you. However, today I will say that regardless of whether I am loved in return I am responsible for my actions in any relationship. As long as I am satisfied with those actions shared with another person, I am at peace with myself even if it does not work out. And in this case, I care for you and I like you. When you enter me, I feel connected to you. My goal is not simply an orgasm but to be one with you for a moment. If I don't climax, I don't feel cheated This is new for me.

And like you, I am scared. I don't want to be hurt but I have to trust myself and the woman I know I am and try. I want you to know that when I attempt to talk to you intimately or I ask you to express your feelings, it does not mean I have named our children or I have written my name as Mrs. So and So just to see "what it looks like! It means I want to know you as a person. I see a lot of good in you and I want to know its source. If you don't want to tell me, say so and please...please don't get an attitude. I am a good woman and I deserve a good man. That's all.

-Sonya Hall

Daytime

Why can't I ever forget
The light in your eye,
The touch of your hand,
Why won't my heart let go of
Your warmth and passion
Your ability to understand.

I tell myself over and over again
That it's over,
finished,
And I've burned all the bridges.

But why is it that whenever I
see you
I fall in love again
Remember your touch, your scent
And the way you used to hold
Me with your hands

We've separated again after
only a brief hello, and the
Only consolation I have is the knowledge that we're
 living under the
 same
 big
 sky

As I sleep tonight I know
I'll dream of you forever
Forever in my arms,
Forever by my side,
Forever mine,
Forever yours.

-Danielle Porshe

Stages Of Falling in Love

Lust

Lust isn't a sin, it's an emotion of the body. It's when your body tells you, "I have no need for food, for sleep; all I need is him."

Excitement

You feel funny all over. You get a power boost that makes you feel invincible; you can do anything, as long as you have him.

Fear

Doubt comes into play. You wonder if he's right for you or if he really cares. Your mind takes over your heart.

Reality

The truth sets in. Love is hard work, love is a game. If you play the game, you can win or lose. There is something to be gained for going the extra mile, and there are rewards for staying when you would rather leave.

-Thim L. McLeod

Blinded

I understand when you could not call me,
I waited patiently for you to come home late,
I dealt with your so-called "girlfriend",
I let you spend plenty of time with the boys,
I listened when you told me you loved me,
I heard you tell me you cared,
Somehow I thought with time you'd change,
I believed you were true to your words,
I wanted so bad to believe we could happen,
You and me together - I was blinded.

-Ronda Robinson

The Trilogy

Infatuation

If only U knew how I think and feel about you.
How I think the sun rises and shines on you.
Obsessive I may seem, wouldn't you say?
But if you asked, I would bring you roses every day.

Not that I'd crowd U or smother that flame of curiosity,
But never an end would there be to my generosity
'Cause I believe you should have all of life's pleasures.
The depth of my love, no ocean could ever measure.

Passion

Is it moonlight dancing on the waves of the beach,
The electricity we other's feel whenever we look in each other's
eyes?
The long embraces that feel like no other
The desire we both feel to be passionate lovers.

The heat we feel with a simple touch
The spark that keeps our love alive
The fire that starts form a simple kiss
- that prelude intensifying an already insatiable desires
The final shiver of ecstasy that completes all.

Aftermath

Where do all the flowers go
What happens to autumn love after the winds blow
Diminishing is the love we once had
How can we rekindle the good that turned bad.

When do we know that the fire has died
When do all the laughs turn to tears inside
Is it possible to bring the love back
That all others said we never should've had?

-Reginald Jones

Are You The One?

Tell me are you the one for me?
Are you the one that will help me rebuild
my heart?

I look at the world with eyes that see
mistrust and hate.

Are you the one to help me see trust and
love?

Are you the one that can get through to my
heart?

Are you strong enough to handle what you
will find there?

A heart in darkness.

Are you the one to shine the light?

Are you ready for the pain trying to reach
me can bring on you?

So ask yourself,
Am I really the One?

-Arana G. Pyfrom

Trust

Trust

So easy to say

Trust

It never comes my way

Trust

Deceptive in its own.

Trust

I'm better off all alone.

- Kemi L. Thompson

Untitled

God guide my footsteps.
Keep me going strong
I've had a lot of disappointments
And I've been real close to happiness
But nothing compares to what I'm feeling now.
And that's loneliness.

God guide my footsteps.
Keep my heart tender
Don't let the spirit of life you breathed into me
Be blown away just as easily.
Please hold my life in the palms of your hands
To keep what's left of it bonded together.

God guide my footsteps always
Because sometimes they stray to the ends of the earth
Wanting to keep walking straight off the edge.
To keep from having to turn back
And make the journey once more without success.
Amen.

-Kara Fenner

Giving My All

How can you expect me to understand
I'm only a child trying to find out who I am

How can you expect me to hear your cry
When all I know is live or die

How can I let you know or make you see
Or be who you want me to be

I'm just young and learning to live
And all I have is my love to give.

-Cecilia Williams

I Miss You Like Crazy

I miss you so much and I know
I'll never be the same again
the worst reality for me to face is as long as I live
we'll never see each other

We went through so much and
you meant so much to me

my big brother and my friend,
nothing and nobody was good
enough for me according to you
and I loved you for it

I call your name and hear your voice
so deep and full of pride you were never why
you always spoke your mind and you told the funniest
stories

you brought out the best and worst in me
and I loved you for it

-Kimberly N. Council

In My Heart

In My heart
I feel that God gave you to me .
There is just something about you
that I can't put my finger on,
that captivates my mind.
No materialistic things
are what I want,
but what I want is you - as a whole.

In my heart
I feel that God gave you to me,
because I was so alone
and our feelings came about mutual.
You're everything that anyone could ever want.
You're smart, sweet, etc...
When we are together
I wish the evening would never end,
but as reality stands before us,
we know that could never happen.

In my heart
I feel that God gave you to me,
And the day we come together as one
and exchange love that God gave man and woman,
We will take the title
of being each other's.

I'm waiting for that day to come
but only you can make that day happen.
So, as my patience holds on to you,
I will wait
and be yours until the end.

-Michelle Hayes

My First Love.

She tells you if you could only see yourself through her eyes.

What does she see?

Her eyes see the best in me.

She's sees the baby she carried for nine months;

The child she bathed and clothed.

She's sees me with a mother's eyes and a mother's love.

To see myself through my mother's eyes is a wonder I will
never know,

but I know what I see when I look at her,

My First Love.

I don't see the woman who grounded me or punished me when
I was wrong.

I see the one heart I never want to break.

It has always been said I was my father's son,
yet before my father saw my face and saw his future in me.

She talked to me, and let me know I was loved.

She made sacrifices to ensure I was born healthy and strong.

I can only say to you remember always your first love.

For I will never forget mine,

For time will pass me again and again.

And I will always say Mother, you are my best friend
and will always be

My First Love.

-Arana Pyfrom

Ask Father

Ask Father why He gives
His love, His life, His care
He'll be there for you always
though often you are unaware
You can never fully understand
the fullness of His love
Though you may see it
the sign of the white dove
'til the end of the day
though night quickly comes
He still will care longer
beaten on the wind like drums
But still darkness creeps in
confusion clouds your eyes
Then you must pray to Father
that you may see the sunrise
Grab onto his light
and never let it go
He'll raise you up to Heaven
even when your life seems low
Hold on to His love
when you feel all alone
And when the clouds pass away
you'll see how much you've grown

-Carl Daniel Larsen



Ideology

Who Gave This Life To Me?

So frail , yet precious, not seen or heard,
 didn't ask to be born, didn't say one word.
Yet life was given to me, and I don't know why,
 and now my mommie says that I have to die.
Haven't gazed into that outside world,
 haven't seen what eyes have seen,
I've only known this one warm place,
 and now I have to leave.
I wish that I could come outside,
 and take a look around,
I wouldn't be any trouble,
 and wouldn't make a sound.
I love my mommie very much,
 her face I'd love to see,
But back to GOD I shall return,
 who gave this life to me.
I'm not upset, won't hold a grudge,
 I'll see her one day soon,
For then she'll know the mistake she made,
 on the table this afternoon.
It's sad to think how close we were,
 the seven months we shared,
I felt her pain, and bore her grief,
 we made an awesome pair.
But then she felt I was too much,
 'cause she's just a kid you see,
So she chose death instead of life,
 who gave this life to me.
And now I am in Heaven's love,
 back where I should be,
In the loving arms of the Lord God,
WHO GAVE THIS LIFE TO ME?

- Joy Blount

In Search of Self

I often sit and wonder about what will become of me,
What will I be?
Where shall I go ?
What should I do ?
Will my success come as a blessed event,
Or will my failure lead me to a world of emptiness ?
Perhaps my dreams, my hopes, and my desires
Will journey me to a place far away,
Someplace where I may truly be given a chance to be myself,
But that leads me to a question, for which I have no answer,
Or maybe the answer is buried deep within me...
Burning, yearning, fighting to emerge,
Desperate to make its presence known,
Those hopes and dreams must become reality,
For what is the purpose of a dream
But to give hope for what one will become?
I ask, simply,
Who Am I?

-Rhonda Wilson

Groove Thing

Rhythm enhances the conversation
but words clutter the definition
Listen
Hear it with your ears
But feel it through your soul
Behold
all you have is a moment in an eternity.
It will never stop
But you may lose it.

-John A. Riddick, Jr.

Beggars

A middle-aged man about his solemn business,
evicting those hopeless vagabonds and welfare cases-
too lazy to work, too ignorant to care.

What's one transient, more or less?

he posts yet another notice upon yet another door.

He drives home in his sleek red beamer
to a mansion far away from the ghetto.

He plops down on his black leather couch
to watch the news on his big screen T.V.

He sees the efforts in Somalia to feed the starving,
"Oh what a pity, what a crying shame."

Feeling mercy for those far, far away-
ignoring those so close to home.

Another man goes about his business,
nearly as solemn, but not the same.

Recently evicted from what he thought a mansion
to live on the dark streets all alone.

A hopeless vagabond, a welfare case.

He begs at yet another door.

He finds his way home by foot-
a cardboard box in a cold, wet alley.

He eases down slowly to sit on the black cement
as he watches the cars speed on by.

"This night is so beautiful, oh what a night,"
feeling thanx to God for being alive
surviving yet one more day.

Another man goes about His business-
still solemn, but not the same.

To judge man by his love for another,
offering rooms for all who will hear.

He never turns away a single one who asks,
for His mansion is endless
and we are all beggars before the Lord.

-Carl Daniel Larsen

Whatcha Say?

You say it's a dog-eat-dog world
And I'm wearing milkbone underwear
Whatcha say?
You say if someone can't accept me for who I am now
Chances are they won't be able to accept the woman I become.
Whatcha say?
If I'm not sure whether or not I can handle the answer
Don't ask the question.
Whatcha say?
A woman that lives by her own rules and lives only for herself
Will soon be corrupted by the company she keeps.
Whatcha say?
A woman that stands for nothing
Will fall for anything.
Whatcha say?
A woman that cuts and shapes herself into what others want
Will soon whittle herself away.
Whatcha say?
Trials come to strengthen our spirits
Not harden our hearts.
Whatcha say?
It depends upon the final cost
Whether it was better to have loved and lost.
If I could do it all over again
I'd certainly listen to WHATCHA SAY!

-Tammy Morrissey

Life Everlasting..

The Lord giveth and taketh, for all belong to him. For in the beginning God was light that shineth in darkness... so shall it be in the end; for he is the beginning and the end of all things, Alpha and Omega. All things shall be done according to his will; through his mercy and grace we are saved.

Oh omnipotent, most high, God, light in times of darkness, healing in time of sickness, my refuge and redeemer, thou and thou alone art God. To thee I shall surely return, for from thee I have come.

It is your spirit that dwells in me, strengthens me, and ables me to carry the heavy burdens of life. In times of adversity you are Shalom (Peace). To thee all praises are due, the giver of everlasting life.

-Gregory R. Dillard

Resurrection

As I peer into a cracked mirror
The reflection stares at me in
 expectation,
I have nothing to give because
I've locked my feeling in
 a box.
And I've lost the key -
 or did I give it away?
I can't remember.
And as I sit there looking
 at the reflection,
It gets sadder as if I've
 disappointed her.
My eyes flick, back to
 the box
in the middle of the room.
I cry in shame because
I don't have a clue as to
What to do.
And as I bring my hands up to
 My face
To wipe the waterless tears
 from my cheeks
I feel a cold metal -
The key has been in
My hands the whole time.

-Danielle Porshe

Freedom or Bondage?

If the basis for Christianity is Jesus being the resurrected Son of God, and if the Bible is the undisputed Word of God, and if in the Bible, Jesus says, “. . . And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (The Holy Bible, John 8:32), then why are Christians in bondage? I surmise they are listening to mortals rather than to God. Today’s religious denominational leaders shackle their congregations in much the same way that Tartuffe, the protagonist in Moliere’s comedy, Tartuffe tried to shackle his victims.

Tartuffe is first mentioned in Act I, Scene 1, when Madame Pernelle is chastising all who are with her for their minor shortcomings; Dorine intercedes with, “To hear him talk—and he talks all the time—/There’s nothing one can do that’s not a crime” (Moliere, “Tartuffe,” Literature of the Western World Vol. II 3rd Ed. Wilkie & Hurt, Eds., NY: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1992, p. 24). Here then, our first impression of Tartuffe parallels some modern-day preachers, who constantly berate their congregations—“Don’t go to movies”, “Don’t go swimming with the opposite sex”, “Don’t wear jeans, tight clothes, shorts, make-up, etc.”, “Don’t miss a church service for any reason”, “Don’t drink”, “Don’t smoke”,—always full of don’ts. Personally, I prefer a few “do’s” in my life! Madame Pernelle’s reply in lines 67-68, “Well, mark my words, your souls would fare far better/ If you obeyed his precepts to the letter” (23), provides a frightening similar many cult and cult-like doctrines. These doctrines substitute biblical principles and truths for personal beliefs that must be followed to the letter. Any variance whatsoever by a member of such an organization would cause rebuttal and/or immediate dismissal from that group. America witnessed the tragic results of such a doctrine in the Waco, Texas incident not long ago. In the same Act and Scene, lines 74-77, Madame Pernelle continues to proclaim Tartuffe: “His own great goodness I can guarantee./ You all regard him with distaste and fear/ Because he tells you what you’re loath to hear,/ Condemns your sins, points out your moral flaws,/ And humbly strives to further Heaven’s cause” (24). Since the Bible clearly states, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Roman 3:23), and “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Roman 3:10), it seems to me that preachers who load condemnation on the heads of their congregations are in blatant sin themselves. Moreover, these “men of God” bind their congregations by heaping on them masses of guilt. We all have guilt and we all sin, but God

tells us, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). In Act I, Scene 4, the overwhelming hold that Tartuffe has on the leader of this family, Orgon, is demonstrated quite comically; Orgon has been away and on his return he inquires of Dorine about his family's well being. However after every statement she makes pertaining to his wife's illness and recovery, he responds immediately, "And, Tartuffe?" Orgon is so brainwashed at this point that his every waking thought is about Tartuffe, whom he has brought into his home to live. Some pastors similarly brainwash congregations to place their particular church above all else—forcing them to worship the pastor or church rather than God. Sadly, in their bondage, these congregations fully believe they are in the total will of God if they obey the desires and dictates of their pastor. One such church approached me to become "one of theirs", so I prayed for discernment from God, then began to attend their Bible Studies. The leader would excerpt one verse, such as "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). Interpreting it to mean that I had to make that church my number one priority over husband, family and friends if I wanted to be a "true disciple" of that church. My discerning spirit gave me corresponding verses invalidating their interpretation, but I was immediately rebuked for being "out of line to question the authority of that church". Needless to say I neither needed nor wanted that kind of bondage in my life. I did not see it as serving God; in fact, it was idolizing that church and its leadership. We observe a similar description in Dorine's discourse in Act I, Scene 2, lines 9-4: "Yes, but her son is even worse deceived; His folly must be seen to be believed. . . . But he's quite lost his senses since he fell Beneath Tartuffe's infatuating spell. He calls him brother, and loves him as his life, Preferring him to mother, child, or wife. In him and him alone will he confide; He's made him his confessor and his guide; . . . In short, he's mad; he worships him; he dotes; His deeds he marvels at, his words he quotes, . . . Tartuffe, much pleased to find so easy a victim, Has in a hundred ways beguiled and tricked him", Orgon has completely lost all reasoning ability as Dorine quite pictorially

describes. His condition is emphasized further when Damis accuses Tartuffe in front of Orgon of trying to seduce Elmire. Orgon flatly refuses to believe his own son's eyewitness report; he even refuses to believe Tartuffe's sarcastic self-confession. On the contrary, he disowns his own son for defaming the name of one who is so righteous. Unfortunately, the naivete displayed by Orgon in relation to Tartuffe is prevalent today, especially in tele-evangelism. In Act III, Scene 7, Lines 32-40, Orgon signs over his possessions to Tartuffe, which parallels ironically with devout followers of some present-day tele-evangelists. I have viewed program after program on television where approximately ninety percent of the air time is spent soliciting funds—some even offering relics such as praying oil, prayer cloths, pins, books, etc. in exchange for particular amounts of money. In fact, millions of Americans were mesmerized into contributing everything they owned in a "partnership" to build the perfect Christian city only to have their hopes shattered and possessions squandered by Jim and Tammy Bakker.

In conclusion, Tartuffe deliberately portrays himself as a pious man of God, placing shackles on his unsuspecting victims—shackles which, like preachers today, condemn rather than free. He flaunts self-righteousness, when, in fact, he is a greater sinner than those he tries to convert. Likewise, many preachers today commit horrendous sins. God does not want His children in bondage to anyone or anything other than Himself, and even then we have a free will to choose. Therefore, if certain denominations, churches, pastors, evangelists, etc. dictate stringent rules, we should remember "Tartuffe" and the lesson taught by this comical, but also tragic, work of art.

-Pat Neems

The Journey

An earnest young man began a journey,
a journey backed by passion and pride.
He gathered his belongings in a bag
and started off on a long ride.
This fiery youth was determined to succeed,
never stopped to rest on the way.
Cold, hungry, tired-he continued on,
unrelenting effort night and day.
The day came he couldn't go on,
his body too weak to try.
He never arrived anywhere,
he sat and had to wonder why.

He thought, and thought, and thought some more
until the reason was simple and clear.
When he realized his problem
his eye shed a single crystal tear.
He began the journey alone,
thinking no one else would care.
He had to complete a journey,
but he never knew to where.

-Carl Daniel Larsen

The Nominees For Best Actor Are...

My brothers! My brothers! What's up with you?
 Why can't you understand;
 Keep all that fake macking to yourself.
 I'm looking for a real man,
 I know it's not all, it's just a few.
 But it angers me just as much,
So for all you good ones, thanks to ya' boys,
 One apple spoiled the whole bunch.
 It's hard to tell the boys from the men
 'Cause their acting has no limitations,
 Lord knows some of you are so damn smooth
 It's worth an award-winning emmy nomination.
Your performance is so full of drama and romance
 To convince me it's all about me and you,
But what's done in the dark will come to the light
 And I heard you told her that too,
 Luckily for me, I'm wiser now.
 I'm glad you finally left.
There's room in my life for a real man now
 So keep your fake macking to yourself.

-Rhonda Wilson

Tomorrow

Oh!
Did I mention to you tomorrow
Is not promised
Listen at me talking, I'm praying
for tomorrow...
Cause God knows,
I'm not right today.

-Shelley L. Graves

The Cause

The Cause of One's Self
Is the Motivation
To live each day
To it's extent
Towards the fulfillment
Of one's goals for tomorrow.

- Anthony B. Fairley

**Backsyde of A Mirror
(Crystal Clear Reflections)**

A mirror always has two sydes.
One that is plain in appearance
And can do nothing but serve as backing,
While the other, clear and smooth,
Can cast a reflection that
Can allow a person to see themselves
In a Light totally unaware that
They possess.
But which syde does what?
Do not judge too quickly...
For all is not as it seems when
you consider what is on
The Backsyde of a Mirror.

Ever wondered what we would find
If we could open our mirrors and
Take a look insyde?
Probably so many skeletons that one would think it was
Halloween,
Or so many hidden secrets,
That it would be hard to make our
mirrors again become clean.

For everyone's mirror was once clean ...
Before we were conceived,
Before nature took control,
Before she ate the fruit,
Before we were corrupted by this
Backward thing we call a world,
Our mirrors were clean.
As clean as the most sterile stream,
As clear as crystal.
So clean, that it did not even have a backsyde,
Just a crystal Clear front
The truth lies on the Backsyde of the Mirror.

Mirror, mirror, on the wall,

Is this mirror image wrong?
Tell us what we can not see,
This truth we call "Reality".
Crystal clear reflections.

But just how is the backsyde of a mirror created?
By temptation. Yes, temptation... To entice to do wrong
By promise of pleasure or gain.
The same kind of temptation that can
Make two lovers that are joined as
One by love and compassion,
Suddenly become separated by lies and lust,
As separate as the sky and the earth itself.
If only a mirror could cast a
Crystal clear reflection.

Temptation once made Cupid's golden
Arrows turn green and tarnish
With ruin by spreading hate...
Instead of love ... or did it?

Every nit, every moment, every thought,
They tell you they love you ... do they?
But just what is this strong emotion,
This deep devotion,
This word used so loosely,
Yet seldom understood?
Love: To feel a passion, devotion
or tenderness for a person
or thing
Do they love? I wonder ...
The answer lies on the backsyde of the mirror.
If only it would cast ...
A crystal clear reflection.

Do you understand?
In the midst of the confusion,
In the turmoil of the illusion...,

In the end ...

It all comes down to to faith and hope

The ability to have faith and hope

In a world lacking in the two.

However it is possible.

It is not inevitable.

The good is there,

The someone is out there...

The hardest venture is the search for the rainbow,

Not so much for the gold

But for the happiness and joy and how

Its vast colors can make one feel.

It is fruitless to assume, senseless to presume.

Live life day-to-day, fact-to-truth.

Look close at the reflections

Casted by the images of a mirror,

But be aware of the backsye...

For the happiness and joy and how

Its vast colors can make one feel.

It is fruitless to assume, senseless to presume.

Live life day-to-day, fact-to-truth.

Look close at the reflections

Casted by the images of a mirror,

But be aware of the backsye...

Always casting a crystal clear reflection.

Mirror, mirror, on the wall

Whose secret outweighs them all,

Tell us what we can not see,

This truth we call reality.

Crystal clear reflections.

-Ayinde Hurrey

Cheap Talk

People are talkin' 'bout me
They are always sayin' somethin' about nothin'
Smilin' in my face
Grinnin' at my pain
Dippin' into my business
People are talkin' 'bout me
It ain't nothin' that they won't say
But they won't say it to my face
People are talkin' 'bout me
Oh God it works my nerves
To have people talkin' 'bout what is mine.

-Rhonda Reese

Somebody

Somebody tell me, what am I supposed to do?
They lack vision, so I lack hope.
Somebody is standing in front of my home selling crack, skunk ,
and dope.
Of course he's strapped, getting hard as he wraps his finger
around the trigger.
Somebody is as equal as I am, yet they still call me a nigger
They won't change, so I can't rest.
Somebody thinks that being a "man" means putting a bullet
through my chest,
Drowning in a culture that swallows us like a flood
Somebody killed a close friend of mine in cold blood
White man this, white man that
How can the white man do this? you ask and I laugh
That Somebody is not the other
That Somebody is my brother

-John Howard

Conversation - A Drug And He

"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"I will be your friend."
"Come unto my World" said a Drug,
"Let our friendship begin."
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"Please give your soul".
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"I'll take control."
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"I'm all you need;"
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"Your blood I want to feed."
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"You'll deceive the ones you love."
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"Before me you'll put none above."
"Come unto my World," said a Drug.
"I'll give you a new life."
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"You must take hold my pipe."
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"Give me all material possessions."
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"I'll be your soul obsession."
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"From me there's no escape."
"Come unto my World," said a Drug,
"Wild thoughts I will create."
"I've come unto your World," said He,
"Oh! What am I to do?"
"I've come unto your World," said He,
"My soul I've given to you."
"I've come unto your World," said He,
"But I don't feel that well."
"I've come unto your World," said He,
"I Feel I am In a Jail...or worse, a living hell."

-James H. Smith

Inside Out

I know you... Inside out.

I've seen your outside and I must say: You look good. I'm looking at your picture right now: Those big, dark brown eyes, Those thick, luscious lips, That silky dark brown skin. And I think, Damn, you look good.

But I know you inside...

You're mean as hell. You talk with a tongue so damned sharp you could cut diamonds. You twist your neck with that "Ms. Thing" attitude and you ain't never got a good thing to say about nobody. I can't even talk to you without getting disgusted. You make me sick.

But you still look good...
So don't wonder why I just want to get you naked.
For I could never love you.
Because-
I know you...

Inside out.

-Donald B. Salmon Jr.

Alone

Alone
Emptiness
Nothing
You can feel it in the pit of your stomach
Something
Filling you up
Expanding
Every empty void filled
Filled with despair
To capacity
Until it bursts
Then, again
Nothing
Emptiness
Once again
Alone

-Eric B. Scott

Losing Battle

Feeling lost in this lost feeling.
Just trying to find myself again.
 I know she was here
 Where did she go
People are all around me, in my face
Yelling into my ears
Telling me what I am and what I feel
They are cocky and full of themselves
Shaking their heads and walking away
They actually look me in my face and tell me who I am
And there I sit listening to them
Sitting there screaming inside
Anger rising up in my body
Wishing, praying that I could find me
So I could tell them all to go to hell
Dealing with these people who are trying to deal with me
People who have only known Rhonda for two months or
two years
But swear that they know enough to tell me who I am
Feeding my thoughts to me with a spoon of their choice
I'm so full, I'm choking.

-Rhonda R. Reese

Lucy In The Sky

She took a train ride. Paid her fare, pushed the turnstile and waited. She imagined herself to be Lucy in the sky when all she had was a quarter in her pocket. But she could carry a tune and create many dreams that disappeared at the slightest hint of sunlight.

She was a simple girl who wore crazed, plaid-mixed prints to hide her non-complexity. Lost in the round, she tried to drown in a barrage of reds and blues. But, somehow, emerged on top a cloud filled with diamonds.

She took a train ride through the Twilight Zone to a small town in America called Willoughby. A town devoid of everything except rail lines that led her straight towards an illusory rainbow. She slid down green and landed in a pot of gold belonging to a giant leprechaun.

She took a train ride. Paid her fare, pushed the turnstile and waited. She imagined herself to be Lucy in the sky and took a dive onto countless rails she saw in a dream before the sun, traveling at great speed, approached her.

-Regina Waith

What Is A Real Man?

What is a real man?

A man who takes control and stands his ground.

A man who will speak his mind, but be humble.

A man who admits his faults and weaknesses and learns from his mistakes.

He gathers wisdom and strength from

trials and tribulations and applies them to his daily life.

What is a real man?

A real man is not afraid to cry,

nor is he ashamed to drop to his knees and pray.

He also realizes that there is none greater than our Heavenly Father who lives high above.

He is provider and protector,

and last but not least

he is a real man.

-Katrenia McPhail

Homeless

What do I have to share with You
my homeless friend of the street?
The sign you carry says you'll work
for just a bite to eat.

I have work, and I have food,
And I have a warm place to sleep.
I have clothes for my back and
my needs are few
My special friend of the street.

I see a longing in your soul
that pleads for me to hear—
to go beyond that sign you carry
And feel your silent tear.

The longing I see from the pit of your soul
is not for food, or work, or such.
But when I look into your eyes
I see that you long for touch.

I feel your hurt, my special friend,
And I want to reach out with touch.
But first I must overcome my fears
To be able to give you that much.

What do I have that I can share?
My heart responds to you.
I'll share my food and clothes and home,
So then your needs will be few.

-Pat Neems

Correcting The Error (Unfinished)

Earth woman, brown woman
My wish is to see you this evening.
A pillow cannot pretend to be your sultry body.
My mind perceives but cannot copy.
Light reflects your beauty into my imagination
But will yourself inhale my fascination?

Her brow is crowned by ebony strands.
Her hue is fine molasses, strong, not bland
From head to toe she's an odyssey.
I map and study the surface like cartography.
My mistake is what a million brothers do all the time:
Memorize her body and forgot about her mind.
Now I'm calm on the outside like a morning at the mall.
(But inside you know I wish you'd call).

Hmm, let's start a discussion
So you forget-me-not like Patrice Rushen.
Small talk: name, interests, hometown, job whatever
Familiarity, friendship, planning time together.
Sense, beauty like Shanice: it's for real.
Had to relate, 'cause if I don't somebody else will.

-Haven Umstead

Closet

Put me in the closet,
'Cause it was dark.
Put me in the closet,
Thought I wouldn't come out.
Put me in the closet,
Thought I couldn't hear or see.
Gagged my mouth so I couldn't talk.
Put me in a closet,
The door came open,
The closet was dark no more.
A stranger then saw me,
ungagged me and let me out.
Thought you had me in that closet,
A-ha, I am out.

-Sandra Theard

Impatient

I've spent my time waiting.
Spent my very life waiting on others.
Being as patient and calm as an evening breeze.
Even-tempered and loving.
Nurturing as if that were my only purpose in life.
I've spent my time waiting for my day to come.
Being patient and calm, understanding
Until my day comes
People keep telling me, "You just wait, your day will come."
I keep thinking to myself, "Hold on, your day will come."
My patience is getting worn and my temper is becoming rigid.
How much longer must I wait for my day to come?

- Rhonda R. Reese

Teach Me

Teach Me,
Do you have the patience to
Teach me?
Food Clothes
mean nothing if,
you just let me grow up!
Teach me,
To be a beautiful rainbow,
Diverse and dignified
Teach me,
Or I'll be a lightnin' storm
an uncontrolled wind, or an ugly, withered flower.
Teach me,
I can love just anyone.
Teach me
Or the love will turn to hate.

-Selena Manning

Everyone

Jump out of the rat race for a moment and allow yourself a moment with yourself! Allow all that is meaningless to exit your mind. Remember? Remember when the most important thing to you was family, your health or learning? Remember when sex, money or shopping were vices far from your purview? They merely served as things that you hoped to learn about -- things you uncaringly waited to experience. Remember when how someone felt or how much you wanted to make someone happy was your only concern? Surely, someone must remember these things! Someone must abandon their desire for sex, their envious ways, their unconcern for others and even their personal wants. Someone must look within himself or herself, mentally document the happenings taking place and be willing to change. Someone must love again without conditions, seek spiritual improvements instead of sexual acceptance. Money can't buy self-fulfillment or happiness. Sex won't secure sincerity amongst partners and it surely won't let love enter your heart. Popularity won't help you earn your degree, nor will it bring you to the next intellectual level... self-understanding. "You are what people say you are," "Everyone's a critic," are true statements when you are living for the world as defined by others. But if you are living in the world that you've defined, by exploring yourself, seeking improvement in all areas of your life, and by truthfully accepting yourself as you truly are, you'll feel and witness your strengths. Life is a series of events that are in cooperation with one another. They work together to create a person who is able to serve, love, understand, share, learn, and eventually pass on all that he or she has experienced. Old age is not as distant as it may seem. Soon, yesterday will seem to be farther and farther away! So take heed to this message and become the man or woman you always knew you could become. Use every moment of God's gift to you... time. Use it with discretion because it won't wait! It will continuously move at a steady pace. There's no pleading or reasoning with it, no deals can be struck, no compromises made with it. It is a gift of happenstance! There's no such thing as another chance when time is involved ... and it's always involved! Walk. Don't run. Don't crawl. Good Luck!!

-Andre Mack

The Moon

What a beautiful sight to see
Many see it but not me.
I just don't see it, I look at the beauty,
For which it wears so well.
One has to look deep, hard and long to tell
I don't just take a peek or a glance.
I wrap my eyes around the romance
It is like one shining eye.
Sitting proudly in the dark sky
Sometime it models only half.
And other times I see all.
The beauty never decreases or falls.
The day is ending, the night is coming soon.
What a beautiful creation is the moon.

-Narviaria Evans

Through Your Eyes

I've heard your cry; I've seen your pain
I've seen you cold, wet and dripping with rain

I've seen you sick
I've seen you well
Your successes and the times you failed

Through your eyes I've seen and felt your glory
Through your eyes I've read your heartfelt story
Of how you've suffered and how you've been denied
About when you were down and the nights you cried

Through your eyes I've seen all of this and more
I've seen you rich and poor

Through your eyes to your heart's deep core.

- Cecilia L. Williams

Philos

I sat on my desk,
and looked out of my window
and saw something that could make
a grown man cry:

Three young boys
in the grass;
Two of them fighting tooth and nail.
The third one watched,
and laughed.

They fought hard.
Punching, kicking, biting, scratching...
until they were tired.

Now here's the part that touches the heart:

They stood up to their feet,
faced each other,
shook hands,
and the third boy who watched,
put an arm around each of them,
and they walked away:
as friends.

-Donald B. Salmon, Jr.

The Mirror Effect

In a world full of expectations
sometimes I find it hard to breathe
In a world full of expectations
many times I lose my way.
Getting lost and suffocating in other people's dreams.
Trying to jump,
my toes barely leaving the ground, high enough to
meet their expectations.
My selfishness does not let me be the best friend.
My impatience and driving need will not allow me to be the
most
understanding lover.
I don't feel like the smartest student.
My youth and foolishness keeps me from being the perfect
daughter.
I am so very imperfect in their world of perfect expectations.
I continue to try and jump high enough
but my toes are barely leaving
the ground.

-Rhonda R. Reese

Untitled

Born with sin I search for the divine
A higher calling to purify my soul
On the day of blessing I come to
ask for forgiveness
and direction
My offerings are small for I have
little to give but myself
Please, Lord, take me as I am
This fashion show amazes me
as those around me show off their
charms and cloth to impress each other
Why can't I just pray and sing songs in your praise
Is this a social gathering or a corporate meeting
Or is it a place of spirit and true higher learning.

-John Howard

Once Envious, Now Envied

When I was young and insecure,
I was envious of you.
A pretty girl, the perfect shape
You were my dream come true.

Your snide remarks, full of conceit
Your cunning little ways
Were like an arrow to pierce my heart,
And shadowed all my days.

So I searched and found in inspiration,
And much to my surprise
Someone was there, where I forgot to look
In front of both our eyes.

Aunt Rachel's successes became my ambitions,
Her goals, my goals to be
To use my mind, my inner self
So college was the key.

The insecurities are gone,
Things of the past.
I now have my own identity
My own dreams, something that will last

When I was young and insecure,
I was envious of you.
But now my cousin, answer this,
Who is envious of whom?

-Thim McLeod

Untitled

I live the life you see on the screen and every night as I lay me
down to sleep

a pop pop pop

is the sound I hear that's the rhythm of a messed up deal as I lay I
remember my senior year and the loss of a friend that I hold dear
he was 17 his life had just begun until he went out a victim of the
gun the summer of '92 I never will forget that's when my cousin
caught two bullets in his chest he didn't make it he was only 22
when I heard there was nothing I could do it didn't end there
'bout a month or so went by a female cousin was the next to die
Daneen was 16 wrong place wrong time still in my heart too
young to say goodbye

Why do we do this to ourselves and who's to blame
it makes me wonder will I ever be the same?

Why do we do this to ourselves and who's to blame
who are the losers and the winners in this game?

I live the life written on the front page
sometimes I wonder if my people can be saved we turn to every
one but never inside
when will we learn from self you cannot hide I am discouraged
when I come home from school
check out the neighborhood see if things are cool
it only depresses me when I hear the news who's in jail, who's
dead, who boned who
the brothers up to no good the sisters stomachs large
the rest are selling drugs and think that they're in charge

Why do we do this to ourselves and who's to blame
it makes me wonder will I ever be the same?

Why do we do this to ourselves and who's to blame
who are the losers and the winners in this game?

-Kimberly N. Council

The Forest

Strolling down the narrow path, Todd breathed heavily, exhaling cool vapor. Red and gold leaves fell like snow onto the pathway nature's premonition of her changing condition. Birds twittered their last songs, and Todd imagined their music a soulful farewell as they flew south, chasing warmer air.

The wind blew through the trees, caressing Todd gently on the cheek and cooling him off. Up ahead a small brown shape hopped across the path. Todd smiled. The rabbit turned around and gave him one last look before disappearing into the undergrowth.

As Todd approached the end of the path, a series of tall pine trees stood in his way. The springy mattress of their needles appeared inviting after the rough, rock strewn path. The needles gently pushed him forward. As he exited the small pine grove, the branches parted to aid in his passage. Off in the distance a screech owl howled in welcome, beckoning Todd further into the forest. He followed its far-off call.

A trickle of sweat wormed its way down Todd's back. Pausing for a moment, he leaned up against a huge oak. The tree soared so high it put a crick in his neck when he tried to see the top. The bark, rough against his hands, tickled when he caressed it lightly. He closed his eyes and allowed the peace of the forest to overwhelm him. It crept into his pores, teasing his spirit, relaxing his muscles. He laughed a hearty, healthy laugh and opened his eyes.

Darkness mocked him. He had paid attention only to the forest and now the night had fallen, leering at him in baleful jest. The laugh, now dead on his lips, echoed into the barren night.

Once again a cold finger of sweat shivered its way down his back. Todd jumped, looking around for the source of the attack. A screech owl laughed in the distance.

Looking around, nothing appeared familiar. Todd chose a direction and headed off. Soon the hardwoods turned to pine, and the branches clawed at him, scraping his face, grabbing his arms. He spit out bitter pine needles that the trees had thrust into his mouth. The mushy earth tripped him up with hidden holes.

As he emerged from the pines, a hole reached out to him and

pulled him to the ground. He crashed onto the rocky pathway. Relieved to have found his way back, he looked up. A dozen pair of eyes winked at him. He stared, vainly trying to penetrate the darkness to the bodies he knew must exist. He stood, the eyes disappearing as he looked back up.

He walked slowly down the path. The underbrush rustled next to him. He spun, heart pounding, eyes frantically searching. His ears now picked up the sound behind him. He spun again. An object, blacker than even the night, sliced its way past his head. He ducked. Panic seeped into Todd's heart. Moonlight now filtered haphazardly onto the path so he ran. The sights and sounds of the forest dimmed with the pounding of blood in his temples and the heaving of his chest. A few minutes later he stood outside the forest and looked up at the wedged innocence of the moon.

-Scott Blienick

Jesus Is ...

The life that makes the living.
The heart that pumps the blood.
The light to change the darkness.
Jesus is The Love.
when there ain't no love.
Jesus is the truth,
The light, and the way
when you can't find it.
Jesus is the rain when the land is dry.
Jesus is the purpose for living,
when it seems like you can't go on,
Jesus is the foundation of your heart's desire.
Just turn him on.
Jesus is #1.

-Sandra Theard

You End The Story

The solar rays penetrated the atmosphere
On a sunny day not May, more like September.
Through Eagleland I walked and thought of sincere
Females as well as drawings I would render.

A mild breeze rushed from the Cherokee Summer
My eyes rushed from person to eye to eye, oh why
Didn't she notice me or was she wondering
To recall a name, recognize or identify.

Whatever, whatever we pass without speaking
She blessed my vision not again 'til later that evening.
I had a mind to get her number
She was minding the office desk, reading *Ex Umbra*.

Your eyes aren't left with the end of this story
Cause it could be you; you end the story for me.
The light reflects your beauty into his imagination
But will yourself inhale his fascination?

-Haven Umstead

Get Down

Get down off the drugs you're using,
Your mind is what you're abusing.
Choosing, refusing, reducing, inducing,
this war on drugs we're losing.
So, why don't you get hipped?
Come from under the rug,
don't destroy your life,
stop messing with drugs,
think of your kids and wife.

Wake up! Don't make the mistake,
because your life drugs will surely take.
Drugs, causing a lot of frustration
let's all beware of this terrible situation.
Everyone's going around, they want to be down;
it's all over town, but it isn't sound.
Hey You! Get out my face
pumping that base.
You need putting in your place,
that's in outer space.
I am the man, with the upper hand,
can't you understand, you must comprehend.
You are just a sucker trying to get down,
I don't mess around, se-e-e ya on the rebound.
I've got a drug that makes me deliriously happy.

I I

I'm not playing get hip to what I'm saying,
the lives of young brothers/sisters we're slaying.
A young black brother killed in the streets,
that's why this war has got to be beat.
One brother killed by another,
claimed to be a friend, an enemy undercover.
I don't mess with drugs, I don't get high:
You must know the truth, there's no need to lie.
YO! Get in the closet,
so you can't be seen,

you're your mother's baby,
you've messed up her dream.
you would one day be a doctor/lawyer,
come out, too late, she already saw ya.
Take a look home-boy drugs will destroy,
can you understand life is not a toy.
People on crack get back,
I'm not laying slack, drugs are wac
With drugs, people want to have a party?
I can't, I'm sorry, they destroy the body.
You best get the real deal,
drugs are for real,
not pulling cards, but drugs will kill.

III

Rap gives brothers/sisters a chance,
to put the fools in a trance,
have some dollars when you feel in your pants.
When some get on the mike,
they emotionally get hype,
tell the world what's wrong, what's right.

Hip Hop music is taking over.
You don't think so?
You're a dog, roll over.

Public Enemy: I like for what they stand.
Brothers selling brothers drugs, not the other man.
KRS1: an idol, a teacher. Why is he a rapper? He
should have been a preacher. Big Daddy Kane:
yes I'm aware. Listen to the man, let him take
you there.
Now I've come to contribute my own,
the name D.J. Shout please leave drugs alone.

IV

Rap music is at it's peak,
tell the young the top they must reach.

To them open your mouth, speak,
they don't hear you, but still you must preach.
Let all know that you are educated,
for years Hip Hop has been degraded.
Could this be that it was started by blacks,
blacks started blues, critics liked that.

Can all relate to where from I come?
I once was blind, but never was dumb.
Rap isn't someone telling a stupid story,
I think it's beautiful, it flows like poetry.
The other man, he can't understand,
how the African hand can be so grand.
The music isn't trash it's going to last,
open up a path don't make people laugh.
The door to the future is in our knowledge,
help prepare the young to enter into college.
Wake up because your mind has been
imprisoned,

Lets get down off drugs
your decision - my vision.

-James Smith

Almost Got Caught Sleepin'

He said Excuse me, what is your name?
She said Well nice to meet you...now what is your game?
He said You see I just moved here from out of town,
 independent woman like you should know her way
 around.

She said Just as a man like yourself is very perceptive.
He said Why thank you, it is rather effective.
 So tell me, are you one who enjoys cheap thrills
 or are you always at home before night?
 Do you hold your man close,
 or do you keep him out of sight.
 So what's the verdict, what do you say...
 The clock is ticking, are you going my way?

She said My, my, my what a wicked game you talk.
 But tell me, is it my mind or my body that you stalk.
 'Cause if it's my body, my temple you will worship,
 before I even allow your eyes to dream of my silk
 corset.
 Only after you put your little ego aside,
 will I even consider taking you on a vertical joyride.
 Your zeal for my presence obvious? Yes quite.
 But to answer the question am I going your way
 tonight?
 Straight to the point, I will waste no time;
 But the answer is obvious, or are you just blind?

-John A. Riddick, Jr.

The Best Advice I Have Ever Received

The best advice I ever received was to strive for best and always achieve.

The best advice I ever received was to put the Lord first and let him take the lead.

We all are nothing without him by our side.

With all the money in the world we're still empty inside.

He touches that place no mortal man can

With the loving touch of his holy hands

The best advice I ever received was to chose my friends so diligently

With friends today, you don't know who to trust

They'll talk about you, cheat, and lie that's a must!

But there's one special friend that knows me deep inside.

He won't lie, he won't cheat, and he's always by my side.

He knows my thoughts, my feelings, even the ones I hide.

He's the one that I love, and no to one can compare!

Because if I ever need him, he's always right there.

-Shelley L. Graves

My Mama Got The Blues

Won't help work or do a thing
Just living to worsen her pain

Hurt her feelings and made her cry
You called her a cheat and called her a lie

She works so hard all by herself
She's not much more and her soul is left

It seems as if she's gone and not here anymore
She's weak, she's sick, and she's poor

I want her back 'cause she's my mom
I want to take her and wrap her in my arms

-Cecilia Williams

Mommy Please

"No, mommy, no. Please don't burn me!
I promise I'll be good. Mommy,
please, no... no... No!" You burned
me, you left a scar that will never
heal.
You burned me!
Oh God, you burned me so bad!
All I ever wanted to do was to please
you.
That's all.
That's all... just please you.
I never could and I never will because you keep burning
me.
You keep leaving scars, and marks, and bruises, and pain,
and frustration and confusion.
I can't keep suffering like this 'cause you can't cope with
who you are and the life that you've been given.
Please mommy, love me.
Love me!
'Cause no matter what I say or what you do,
I'll always love you.

-Nathaniel Todd

Untitled

Caged from within, trapped and confused
Afraid to choose a path that will take my life to its end
A victim of a society that respects security of a lesser cause,
Rather than the risks from the soul of a visionary.
Suits and ties confine my soul,
An artist is what I am, and should be
As I shape words with my mind and hands,
If I achieve greatness then I may attain my security
No such thing as a failure,
For what I chose came from me.

-John Howard

Fast Car

Jus' ridin' away
With the wind in my hair
No need to worry,
And no need to care...

Jus' ridin' away
To start again
Lookin' for a better life
And a truer friend ... I'm free!

-Danielle Porshe

Father

The father of contention
often calls my name.
To contend with another
seeming but a game.
To anger with little reason
revenge for wrongs received.
Caught up by the moment
too quick to be deceived.

Oh, Father, I call your name,
lead me to a better day.
Weak, Father, now I cry
please show me a better way.
I shiver in this lonely world,
forgotten in the streets so cold.
My temporal wants implore me,
into carnal bondage I'm sold.

Oh Father, my God, help me
I beg at your feet.
Oh please show me mercy
when you sit on the judgment seat.
I'm dying, Father, let me live
and know your joy and love.
A sign to show me the way of
hope on the wings of a dove.

-Carl Daniel Larsen

The Man I See In The Mirror

I look in the mirror and what do I see?
Where there should be me, a stranger I see.

The man I see in the mirror is me,
Yet he is a stranger to me

How can it be?

The eyes are the mirrors of the soul, they say,
so how can eyes that are said to be so full of light and warmth
be so cold and dark.

The man I see in the mirror is a stranger to me.

How can it be?

I believe I am a man with a warm heart,
capable of love and kindness.

Yet the man I see in the mirror is full of hate and hopelessness.

How can it be?

The man I see in the mirror is not me

Yet, the mirror does not lie.

How can it be?

Unless the man I see in this mirror is the truth,
and the lie is me.

Could it be?

-Arana G. Pyfrom

Who Are You?

I want to know you. everything about you. What goes on inside your mind? What sparks lie under your emotions? Where do I look and what would I find?

What could move the stone that hides your sensitive heart? What makes you laugh. what makes you cry? Yeah. What brings tears to your eyes? What makes you smile. What makes you sigh?

Do you fear me, or men in general? Is it things that you've heard? Or is it some personal vendetta? I'm listening. Every word.

If I were to find your secrets and earn your trust, If I was to gain the rewards that'd make all so envious, If we found ways to love each other from dawn to dusk, Then nothing under God's sun or moon could come between us.

-Reggie Jones

Trust

A shrill scream shatters the brittle air
a child shivers in fear
The man he trusts towers over him
holding a belt in his hand
Across the city a silent moan
a battered woman sheds a single tear
The man she trusts towers over her
putting his pants back on
Here inside this house is pain
a boy raped of his pride
The man he trusts towers over him
turning away now in disgust
Pain fills the corridors of his mind
suppressed now as the day-dawn comes
A boy now, soon a man
that can not carry on
A world drowning in the chaos of living
silent rage fills the air
Dying now, the world cries out
but isn't heard over the laughter
Satan's demons carry on
bathing in the blood of their victims
Evil pervades the depths of hypocrisy
laughter muddled by the cloak of humanity
And still we must go on

-Carl Daniel Larsen

Strapped

This is dedicated to all the Casanovas,
the playboys, the lovers that try to get over.
They had better realize that the stuff can be stale,
fire in the wrong path and time will tell.
To all the brothers that like lovin' and affection,
You best stay STRAPPED, you best keep protection.

I don't care how the girl looks, clean and nice figure--
you best be strapped if you want to get with her. No matter if
your gun is smaller or bigger, you can get stunned and that's the
truth my n....r. The J.B.'s say that the jimmy is large, a big round
gun that's loaded and charged. To use the jimmy can be pleasure
and fun, but if you use it in the wrong way you will surely get
done. Some lay down with a girl and a powerful erection, they
wake up itching because they didn't use protection.

I had a homie named Tony, loved macaroni,
got a fine female, made her his tenderoni.
Tony and I would ride all over town,
looking for girls so we could get down.
Everywhere we went, he received a list,
everytime I spoke I would always get dissed.
So Tony had a female set for one night,
I asked, "You're going to be strapped, homie is that right?"
He replied, "No man those things are too tight.
I have to feel flesh when I'm laying pipe."
Three days later he had a greenish-complexion.
I asked, "What's wrong homeboy?"
He said, "I didn't use Protection."

My nephew, you all know the type,
light-skin, curly-hair, that all the girls like.
We were riding in the Max, because that's the way we ride,
stopped at a light, a convertible pulled to our side.
So Darrell started talking to the girls in the car,
He told one girl he would make her a star.

This is what he said to the lovely creature,
"Can I teach ya, can I reach ya, baby can I meet ya.
Get down on your knees, relax to the breeze, I
am going to teach you the birds and the bees."
He gave her blunts, blow all that she wanted,
five minutes later my cousin was up on it.
He laid her on the ground deep down in the woods,
"Oh baby, oh baby, um this feels good."
I won't say much more, he was in a roar,
in the health department because his gun was sore.
He found him a skeezer received a powerful erection,
laid her down for the kill, but didn't use protection.

Now I've looked at something serious in a sarcastic way,
this issue is important in our lives today.
Let's all face reality, come on get with it.
S.T.D. is contagious. I've had it, you can get it.
I've learned my lesson never again,

I now stay Strapped before I release, my friend.
There would be less abortions, suffering and pain.
Being strapped can prevent syphilis, a disease that ruins the
brain.
Fewer people in the clinics, a lot of lives saved,
if we all stay Strapped we can stop the spread of AIDS.
It has no name, race, not even a preference,
I thought I would say this as sort of a reference.

We engage in sex because it brings satisfaction,
but we need to think twice before we make this injection.
Many lives have been lost because people didn't use
protection.
SO STAY STRAPPED!!!

-James Smith

The Light

In the beginning all was dark,
there was no light to see.
Every man acknowledged the other man
for we were all the same.
Then day began to be
as light penetrated the night.
And life was never the same.

With light came color
and man began to see.
White man, black man, yellow man, short and fat--not the
same. The differences came to be
as light penetrated the night.
And life was never the same.

These differences caused delusions,
ones no one could see.
Hate and fear for the other man
because he was not the same.
Then racism came to be
as light penetrated the night.
And life was never the same.

In the shadows all is dark, there is no light to see.
But the light shows a different man, we can never be the
same.
Since day began to be
as light penetrated the night.
And life was never the same.

-Carl Daniel Larsen



How E











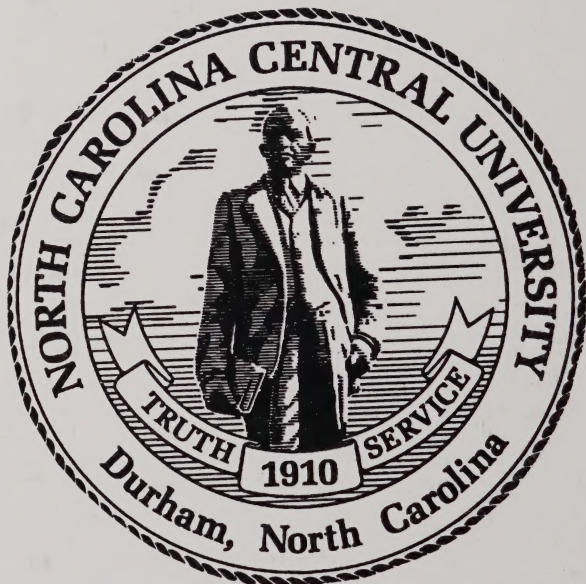








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